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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AmEmbassy TRIPOLI

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

June 5, 1959
DATE

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL ON AMERICAN AID, AL-RAID, MAY 30, 1959. FCO 3 USIA-10 Army-7 AMB-4 Navy-3 OSD-4 MAAG-1

Attached is an informal translation of an editorial from the May 30, 1959, issue of the Tripoli weekly newspaper AL-RAID which puts forth the reasons why Libya should receive increased assistance from the United States.

This editorial is the most reasoned, objective, and lucid press exposition on the subject which has come to the Embassy's attention. The Department will recall that AL-RAID is occasionally used by the Federal Government as a vehicle for presenting its views to Tripolitania's readers and it seems probable that this editorial was stimulated by the GOL.

The article summarizes the amounts of US aid given Libya over the past five years, states that American help is not charity but an obligation of the US, and that what is given is not enough in light of Libya's contributions to the United States, as follows:

(1) Although the Air Base existed before Libyan independence, the GOL ratified the Agreement, unlike Morocco, and would the American position in the world be the same if the GOL had refused to allow Wheelus Field to remain.

(2) Libyan policy has been coordinated with that of the United States. Despite criticism, for example, Libya approved the Eisenhower Doctrine.

(3) Libya's geographic position between "the two wings of the Arab world" and facing the middle of Europe gives it a highly strategic importance, related to the significance of Wheelus Air Base.

(4) US companies have the lion's share of petroleum concessions and in the event of war Libyan oil will to a large extent decide the results.

Finally, the Base represents a peril to those Libyans living in its vicinity and, the editorial concludes, as Libya has no enemies, why should its people offer themselves "as cheap sacrifice in a war which does not concern" them.

[redacted] J.M. Razi 5/6/82

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JHBoughton:mfg
REPORTER

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These arguments are cogent ones, although exaggerated to a degree, and it can be expected that they will be further developed, although not in the relatively moderate language used in this editorial, if the USG is not responsive to what the Libyans consider to be their minimum requirements.

For the Ambassador:

James H. Boughton
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

1. Informal translation of editorial from AL-RAID, 5/30/59.

cc: AmEmbassy Benghazi

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INFORMAL TRANSLATION

Editorial from AL-RAID, May 30, 1959.
(Front Page, First Column)

WHAT DOES LIBYA GIVE TO AMERICA?

We have promised our readers a commentary on Mr. Gordon's report.* (Mr. Gordon was the former Director of the USOM in Libya). We choose the heading above to be our subject because the American people and the American taxpayers particularly seem not to realize or to appreciate what Libya has given and still gives to the United States. They think it is unreasonable to believe that a small, poor country such as Libya could ever give anything - whatever that might be - to a great, rich, gigantic nation like the USA.

Before tackling the subject we would like to make an introduction with three points:

(1) We recognize the leadership of America within the Free World and we believe that this recognition of ours is attributable to our own basic interests. We also believe that in the defense of the Free World it is premature to exchange toasts or words of praise so long as the enemy is alert and awake. His alertness compels us to identify our faults and mistakes and to correct them before they are exploited by others.

(2) Many people feel humiliated when accepting charity from another country, even if that country is America, the leader of the Free World. American talk about the charity it is dispensing could have a bad influence on its cause and its relations with other peoples everywhere. We do not consider ourselves to be receiving charity, but rather receive a portion of what is legitimately due us in return for mutual interests.

(3) The report itself is a factual one and gives only true facts and figures, although some were completely overlooked, not mentioned at all, and others were fully dealt with. Nevertheless our commentary will not be confined to the report, but will cover various aspects of American aid.

Bearing in mind these three points, we can proceed.

/ America has

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* This refers to the pamphlet "A Nation Grows - Libya 1959", the pictorial report by Mr. Marcus J. Gordon, former USOM/L Director.

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America has given Libya in the past five years the following:

(1) $65,932,000 in financial and economic aid.

(2) $11,000,000 as technical aid for experts' salaries and expenses.

(3) Relief wheat - grain and flour.

(4) Aid through CARE.

(5) Some military help.

All the above is estimated to total within this five year period about one hundred million dollars, i.e. twenty dollars per capita every year. If these statistics and calculations are correct then this sizable amount could have contributed towards great development in this country. Have these funds been spent in the most appropriate manner? This is irrelevant and we return to our subject and repeat that, according to what we know, these amounts cover everything America has given to Libya.

But what Libya has given to America has received no publicity, a fact which has left most Americans in complete ignorance about the matter. While the American authorities who are aware of this have done nothing towards informing their people about Libya's contribution, on the other hand various ways have been used of publicizing the aid given by America to Libya. Therefore, we are obliged to discuss Libya's contribution not to remind America of favors done for her and not for the purpose of influencing our delegation negotiating for the modification and amendment of the Agreement, but only to convince the American taxpayer that whatever he pays us is not charity, but is a part of an obligation, especially if it is compared with what other nations, such as Israel, are receiving from the United States. If a person gives charity, he is free to distribute it in the way his human feelings dictate, but if he pays for benefits and services exploited and used by him, he then has no alternative but to pay the price and value of these benefits and services irrespective of the state and situation of their owner and provider.

Has America paid us a just and reasonable price? We have no accurate figures as to this question, but there is a great difference between what America has paid us in the past five years and what has been paid in one year to a country like Israel, or France or Italy or Germany, etc., etc. This makes us believe that the United States has not paid us what is right and what is due to us.

Here are some of the things which Libya has contributed:

(1) Although the American Base in Libya was established before independence, the Libyan Government ratified the Agreement, but could have refused in the same way the Moroccan Kingdom has done and is insisting that the Americans leave

/ Morocco.

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Morocco. Nothing can be done unless Morocco changes its mind and allows them to stay. Would America's world position be the same had it not been for the Libyan Government's agreement that the Base could remain in Libya?

(2) Libya has worked toward coordination with American policy in the world in general and in the Middle East in particular. For example, Libya approved the Eisenhower Doctrine without any return (unlike other states), despite the great criticism to which it was exposed from peoples in sister nations and from the Libyan people themselves. Does the American taxpayer realize and appreciate the importance of this coordination and cooperation?

not true.

(3) The Base Agreement: the American commanders have praised this Base on the grounds that it affords them a splendid place for training most of the year. But is that the chief reason which makes the Base important? We believe that the geographic position of Libya is what gives it a special strategic importance. It occupies a key position between the two wings of the Arab world and directly faces the middle of Europe. Does the taxpayer recognize this significant fact?

(4) Exploration for petroleum: we do not want to say that Libya was generous with the American oil companies by giving them the lion's share or more in the concession contracts. But we can say that although the Americans are considered oil experts of the first order, they are not gods and cannot discover oil unless that oil exists and is available. In this respect they stand on equal footing with the experts of other countries.

The great importance of Libyan oil will not be disregarded when and if war breaks out. At such a time, the Persian Gulf petroleum will lose all of its importance and the results of the war will to a large extent be decided by Libyan oil.

Does the American taxpayer realize and appreciate that Libya has enabled his country to dominate and control this factor?

In closing, we are in a hurry and have not mentioned the life of Tripoli town and the safety of the Libyan people who "voluntarily" choose to live close to extermination and annihilation.

American bases in Europe form part of the plans for American defense, but we have no enemies and why should we offer ourselves as a cheap sacrifice in a war which does not concern us. And after all this, they come to us and say: "What did you contribute?"!

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